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ALLEN DOWNS MS CMHT

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R. Allen Downs, MS, CMHT
Mental Health Therapist

573 South Hull Street
Montgomery, Alabama 36104

334-269-0733 (Office)
334-269-0744 (Fax)

February 1, 2007

Honorable Judge Mark Fuller
United States District Court

RE: Judy Banks Sims

Dear Judge Fuller:

I am writing you on behalf of a personal friend and mother of a former patient, Ms. Judy Sims. I first met Judy around twenty years ago when she came to me as a concerned mother. At that time her son, Will, was having acute panic attacks with uncontrollable generalized anxiety. It seems that Will had yet to be properly diagnosed and treated and had become increasingly agoraphobic. At age ten he could not attend regular school because of his very serious condition. His symptoms were so pronounced that he had to be "home schooled". His mother, Judy, served as his daily teacher for several years until Will's illness could be properly treated and eventually stabilized. She probably saved the boy's life, both literally and figuratively speaking.

As I watched her caring style with her son, I began to admire the moral, sympathetic, warm-hearted way in which she approached other people in her life, such as her husband, other family members, neighbors, friends, employees, as well as the community as a whole. I suppose I admired her because she and I are very much alike in that we are both "caretakers" of almost everyone around us. In all of the years that I have known the Sims family, I have NEVER heard even one disparaging or negative word about her from anyone. She is always the first to to the aid of those in need whether it is her friends' children, the guy who cuts her grass, or the trash man. Judy has developed a tremendous reputation for helping the less fortunate and downtrodden.

Having said that, let me speak to you of Judy Sims from a clinical perspective. She has informed me of the allegations before you today. In all of the years that I have known her she has never exhibited one single criminal trait or sociopathic characteristic. The crime for which she has been charged is totally out of character for her. I know her to be generous even to a fault. It is hard for me to imagine her stealing anything. Personality disorders are easy to spot after thirty-one years of professional psychological service. I can assure you that pathology would have shown itself in her history, career, family life, and especially the legal system. To my knowledge, there has been none. In her sixty years, there are no character blemishes. I believe that outside problems in her life must have caused a lapse of attention to business and a lapse of her usual good judgment.

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Therefore, I respectfully ask that you show leniency in this most special of cases and circumstances. I fear that incarceration of Judy Sims would lead to an acute exacerbation of her son's illness and possibly a downward spiral of her husband's already serious medical condition. In fact, Will's condition began to deteriorate just recently. Since learning of his mother's possible imprisonment Will has had increased anxiety, one night even having an uncontrollable physiological and psychological panic attack triggered by watching a movie in which a woman was sentenced to prison. He has since begun an all too familiar regimen of medication, but his prognosis would be "guarded" at this point.

Thank you, Your Honor, for your most wise and gracious deliberation in this very important matter. If I can by of any further assistance, please feel free to contact me.

Respectfully yours,

R. Allen Downs, MS, CMHT
Certified Mental Health Therapist